

## Attitude towards Knowledge Sharing among Under Graduate Students in Kerala

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### *(Abstract)*

*This study analyses the attitude of under graduate students in Kerala towards knowledge sharing. Sharing of knowledge is of significant importance among academics as it leads to generation of new knowledge. The pertinent research question addressed in the study is what is the nature of attitude toward knowledge sharing among the under graduate students in Kerala and whether it is influenced by personal and academic variables like gender, stream of study and types of institution. The research design is cross sectional in nature and is positivistic. The study has been carried out on a representative sample of 400 under graduate students studying in different colleges in Kerala state of India. The data has been collected by employing attitude towards knowledge sharing scale developed by the investigator. The study reveals that there is positive attitude towards knowledge sharing among under graduate students in Kerala. It also reveals that the attitude towards knowledge sharing has been differing significantly with respect to gender, stream of study and type of institution.*

**Key words:** Attitude; Knowledge Sharing; Under Graduate Students

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### 1. Introduction

Knowledge is a social phenomenon and hence it involves people. Knowledge is comprised of experience, values, contextual information, and insights acquired through experience. Knowledge is created and implemented in the brain of a person. Beerli (2002) asserts, knowledge can be regarded as the only unique resource that grows when shared, transferred, and managed skilfully. Knowledge is a crucial asset to individuals as well as enterprises wanting to succeed in an increasingly changing environment (Abdel-Aziz & Bontis, 2010; Aktharsha, 2011; Boateng, Dzandu, & Tang, 2014; Cohen, 2013; Drucker, 2002; Kowalczyk & Nogalski, 2007; Oinas-Kukkonen, 2008; Paliszkievicz & Koohang, 2013, Tsai, Tsai, Li, & Lin, 2012; Ziemba, 2013). Davenport (1997) defined knowledge sharing as *voluntary* and distinguished it from reporting. While reporting involves the exchange of information based on some routines or structured formats, sharing implies a voluntary act by an individual who participates in the knowledge exchange even though there is no compulsion to do so. According to Hendriks (1999), knowledge sharing suggests a relationship between at least two parties—one that possesses the knowledge and the other that acquires the knowledge. Knowledge sharing involves the interaction of activities that include dissimulation, feedback and absorption between individuals (Davenport and Prusak, 2000). Knowledge sharing is defined as exchanging experiences, thoughts or understandings with an expectation of gaining further knowledge. This implies reciprocity among people wanting to increase their knowledge base (Gouldner, 1960). The outcome of knowledge sharing is the creation of new knowledge and innovation that enhances performance and competence of individuals involved and the organisation. Knowledge sharing is part of humans' uniqueness and attitude. Knowledge has no value unless it is shared and used in some way. In other words, sharing knowledge is the natural way to increase its value. Nonaka and Konno (1998) explained that the knowledge sharing process includes socialisation (sharing experiences), externalisation (articulating implicit knowledge into explicit concepts), combination (synthesising and systematising fragments of explicit knowledge) and internalisation (turning explicit

knowledge into tacit knowledge by applying it in real situations). The studies of Vazquez, Fournier, and Flores (2009), Bures (2003), Riege (2005), Bock, Zmud, Kim, and Lee (2005) and Ardichvili, Page, and Wentling (2003) investigate the impacts of culture on knowledge sharing practices. Areekkuzhiyil (2016) studied the knowledge sharing practices of teachers working in higher education sector.

## **2. Need and Significance of the Study**

Earlier attempts to explain knowledge sharing behaviour has been based on different theories among which theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) introduced by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) has been widely used. According to TRA, person's attitude (A) and subjective norm (SN) concerning a specified behaviour determines the behavioural intention (BI) to perform the behaviour, which in turn determines the person's performance of the behaviour in question. Hence, the attitude plays an important role in the knowledge sharing. Analysis of the earlier studies shows that most of the studies on knowledge sharing have been conducted in organisational contexts. Only limited numbers of studies are available on educational contexts. Knowledge sharing among students is an unexplored area and hence this study has been focusing on the attitude towards the knowledge sharing among under graduate students.

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

The study has been designed with the following objectives.

1. To analyze the attitude towards knowledge sharing among the under graduate students in Kerala.
2. To compare the attitude towards knowledge sharing of different sub samples of under graduate students.

## **4. Hypotheses**

Based on the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated and verified.

1. Under graduate students in Kerala have a positive attitude toward knowledge sharing.
2. The attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students in Kerala differs significantly with respect to gender, types of institution and stream of study.

## **4. Methodology**

The study is positivistic in nature and hence uses quantitative methodology. The variable under study namely, attitude toward knowledge sharing has been assessed and quantified.

The study is a descriptive one based on empirical data with cross sectional design. The study uses primary data which have been collected from a representative sample of 400 under graduate students studying in various colleges in the Kerala state of India by administering the Attitude toward Knowledge Sharing Scale (Areekkuzhiyil, 2018) which is a five point likert type scale. The reliability of the scale has been established by estimating the Cronbach alpha, which is found to be very high. (0.808). Hypotheses have been formulated and tested for significance.

## 5. Results and Discussion

The collected data has been initially tested for normality and confirmed that that the scores of attitude toward knowledge sharing of under graduate students are normally distributed. Then the data has been analyzed for testing of hypotheses using statistical techniques like one sample t test, independent sample t test and one way ANOVA. Tukey HSD test has been employed for post hoc analysis.

### 5.1. Nature of Attitude toward Knowledge Sharing of Under Graduate Students

The scores of attitude toward knowledge sharing of under graduate students have been computed and the same had been compared with the score indicating the neutral attitude (45) using one sample t test. The result is presented in table1.

Table 1: Attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t Value	P Value
Attitude towards knowledge sharing	400	62.3537	5.99	56.157**	0.000

*\*\* Significant at 0.01 level*

The table 1 shows that the under graduate students in Kerala have a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. The mean attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate student is 62.35 with standard deviation 5.99, which is higher than the neutral attitude score (45). The difference is 17.35 which statistically significant at 0.001 level. Hence the hypothesis that under graduate students in Kerala has a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing has been accepted. It is a good indication that under graduate students in the state has a positive attitude towards knowledge sharing.

### 5.2. Attitude towards knowledge sharing of different Sub Samples of Under Graduate Students

Table 2 present the results of the comparison of the of the mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of different sub samples of under graduate students based on gender, types of institution and stream of study.

Table 2: Attitude towards knowledge sharing of different sub samples of under graduate students

Sub Sample		N	Mean	SD	CR	P Value
Gender	Male	157	59.869	6.653	4.422***	0.000
	Female	243	63.093	5.65		
Stream of Study	Science	50	65.32 <sup>a</sup>	5.81	5.443***	0.000
	Commerce & mgt	50	61.26 <sup>c</sup>	5.29		
	Language	100	61.378 <sup>c</sup>	5.977		
	Social Science	68	63.929 <sup>b</sup>	5.304		
	Computer Science	32	63.366 <sup>b</sup>	5.443		
Type of Management	Government	142	62.915 <sup>a</sup>	5.66	3.626*	0.028
	Aided	132	62.393 <sup>a</sup>	8.124		
	Self Financing	126	60.98 <sup>b</sup>	6.964		

\*\*\* Significant at 0.001 level

\* Significant at 0.05 level

Different alphabets denote difference in Turkey's HSD test

The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of undergraduate students in Kerala belonging to males and females sub samples has been compared using t test. The mean score of attitude towards knowledge sharing of female under graduate students (63.093) is higher than their male counter parts (59.869). The difference is statistically significant at 0.001 level ( $t = 4.422$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ).

The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students studying different steams have been compared using ANOVA. It reveals that the mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students studying different steams differ significantly at 0.001 level ( $F=5.443$ ,  $P = 0.000$ ). The analysis show that mean score of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students belonging to science stream (65.32) is higher and significantly differ from the mean scores of under graduate students belongs to all other streams. The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students belonging to social sciences (63.929) and computer science (63.366) stream do not differ significantly to each other but significantly differ with respect to the means scores of all other streams.

The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students belonging to language (61.378) and commerce & management (61.26) streams do not differ significantly to each other but significantly differ with respect to the means scores of all other streams.

The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students studying different types of institutions have been compared by employing ANOVA. The result of ANOVA reveals that the mean scores differ significantly based on the types of institution at 0.05 level ( $F= 3.626$ ,  $P = 0.028$ ). The mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students studying government institutions (62.915) and government aided institutions (62.393) are more or less same but the mean score of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students studying in self financing institutions (60.98) is comparatively lower.

Hence, the hypothesis that the mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students in Kerala differs significantly with respect to gender, types of institution and stream of study has been accepted.

## **6. Conclusions and Suggestions**

The study reveals that there is positive attitude towards knowledge sharing among the under graduate students in Kerala. The attitude towards knowledge sharing has been differing significantly with respect to gender, stream of study and type of institution. Female under graduate students has a higher level of attitude towards knowledge sharing compared to their male counterparts. Students belonging to science and computer science stream have comparatively higher mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing. Compared to the students of government and government aided institutions, students from self financing colleges have less mean scores of attitude towards knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing being a critical phenomena in the academic life of learners, they must have a positive and higher level of attitude. The study reveals that gender, institutional factors and discipline of study has a bearing on the attitude of under graduate students towards knowledge sharing. Hence there must be programmes and practices for enhancing the attitude towards knowledge sharing of under graduate students specific to different sub strata of students. Attitude toward knowledge sharing of students has to be enhanced as it has a bearing on their knowledge sharing practices and generation of knowledge.

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